

HINCKLEY KNITTING MILLS, STOREHOUSE
(Hinckley Knitting Mills, Bldg. B)
21-35 East Wister Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-212-B

HAER
PA
51-PHILA,
708B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Mid-Atlantic Region
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

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Location:

21-35 E. Wister Street
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

Present Owner:

Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation
48 East Penn Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Present Occupant:

Vacant.

Significance:

Built in 1876, Building B, a three-storey brick and stone storehouse, is one of the two surviving industrial structures built within the mill complex's period of significance.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

Date(s) of Erection:

Building B was built in 1876.

Architect:

Unknown.

Original/Subsequent Owners:

See Chain of Title.

Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Unknown.

Original Plans/Construction:

As noted on the 1879 Hexamer Survey, Building B was built as a 3-story stone and brick storehouse, with a low-gabled tin roof. Specifically, the first floor stored yarn and wool, the second floor stored manufactured goods, and the third floor was a general storeroom.

Alterations/Additions:

Building B was altered with the addition of a fire escape on its front facade (south elevation), connecting the second and third floors. Also, Building C was constructed in the 1950s, and obscures a portion of Building B's south elevation.

B. Historical Context

Building B, along with the adjacent Building A, are the only remaining structures from the original Hinckley Knitting Mills. Built at a time when Aaron Jones' Mill employed 200+ hands, both buildings are examples of 19th century industrial architecture. Building B was linked to since-demolished Building I by wooden walkway that traversed the courtyard. The second floor of Building I was where packing took place, and from there, the goods would be taken across the walkway to be stored in Building B.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

Architectural Character:

Building B is a mid-nineteenth century vernacular industrial building.

Condition of Fabric:

Poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior

Overall Dimensions:

40' x 84', 3 storeys, 6 bays.

Foundations:

Rubble stone.

Walls:

Stucco over stone and brick. Thickness ranges from 21" on the first floor to 13" on parts of the third floor. Exposed diamond tie-rod plates on the front facade.

Structural System/Framing:

Masonry load bearing with interior timber framing.

Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

None. Originally, an open wooden bridge extended from Building B across the courtyard to the since-demolished Building I. The bridge entered Building B on the second floor of the south elevation, the second bay from the left.

Chimneys:

The 1879 Hexamer Survey notes an interior chimney on the rear slope of Building B, flush with its eastern wall.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

On front facade, there is a wooden doorway on the second floor, the second bay in from the left. It is presently accessible from the fire escape, and previously was accessible from the wooden walkway. On the first floor, there are three exposed bays (the other three are obscured by Building C): two of the bays are doorways covered with plywood and one is a garage opening at the western-most bay with a double-leaf, cross-braced door of solid wood.

Windows/Shutters:

The majority of windows on Building B are covered with plywood. Others have wooden, six-over-six double-hung sash.

Roof:

Built-up asphalt roofing. Originally had a brick cornice.

C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

Three floors of large, unpartitioned spaces with wood columns at regular spacing. First floor is recessed, on a slope, at western end, to allow unloading.

Stairways:

Wooden stairway in northwest corner of Building B. Existing freight elevator replaced original hatchway.

Flooring:

First floor: concrete.

Upper floors: 1-1/4" yellow pine flooring boards.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

Plaster walls with exposed ceilings. Original heights of floors were:

First floor: 14'

Second floor: 10'

Third floor: 12'

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Four-panel, solid wood doors. Molded surround.

Windows:

Simple, molded surround.

Decorative Features and Trim:

Not applicable.

Hardware:

Modern replacement locks, hinges, and knobs.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

Originally warmed by 1" wrought and 6" cast-iron steam pipes resting on iron.

Lighting:

Modern electrical fixtures.

Plumbing:

Not available.

D. Site

General Setting/Orientation:

Building B is at the rear of the Hinckley Knitting Mills lot, adjacent to Building A. To its south is Building C, to its east is the Germantown Dye Works, and to its north are rowhouse properties along Collom Street.

Historic Landscape Design:

Building B, along with Building A, were situated away from the main Hinckley Knitting Mills buildings, separated by a courtyard. Two small frame structures, labeled "Killing Acids" and "Sulphur House," were attached to its south elevation at the eastern end. Drying frames were placed in the courtyard, in front of Building B, as well as the wooden walkway, extending south from Building B to Building I.

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Outbuildings:

None